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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 15th
ELECTION, TRANSPARENCY; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: The major theme of today's editorials was
Thursday's parliamentary election.

Analysis: The majority of the day's editorials continued,
for the second day running, addressing the success of
Thursday's election. Quasi-independent daily As-Sabah
highlighted the importance of establishing the Council of
Representatives as soon as possible while independent Az-
Zaman focused on how the election successfully unified all
components of Iraqi society. Other editorials, such as the
one that appeared in Democratic Al-Wifaq criticized the
political and electoral process, arguing that honest
elections cannot be held under the presence of U.S.
occupation. SCIRI affiliated Al-Adala's editorial dealt with
the preliminary results of the elections showing that the
UIA has won according to its own projections. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[1A. We Want a Strong Government and a Balanced Harmony"](#)
(Baghdad, affiliated with the INA, led by Iyad Allawi,
published a front-page unattributed editorial about the
Iraqi election and the irregularities that coincided with
the election. In part, the editorial reads)

"The Iraqi National List participated in the election to
establish a strong, national unity government that includes
all segments of Iraqi society. This government must also be
able to achieve political and social harmony; this harmony
will attain social justice and balance. The Iraqi people are
looking forward to forming a government that is able to save
them from their difficult suffering. Concerning
deba'athification, Dr. Iyad Allawi has asserted that this
law must not be a tool for punishing both innocent and
guilty people. This is exactly what our list is aiming to
establish. However, members of our list have been targeted
and some of them were martyred. In addition, pictures of our
candidates were ripped down in Baghdad and other provinces.
These violations must not be ignored and we must inform the
relevant authorities so that the electoral process will not
be rigged, lest the future of Iraq be in danger."

[1B. "Results"](#)
(Al-Adala, affiliated with SCIRI, published a third-page
editorial by Dr. Ali Khalif about the preliminary results of
the elections, which indicate that the UIA won most of the
votes. In part, the editorial reads)

"The preliminary results of the elections were neither
expectations nor surprises; rather, they are facts. There is
an overwhelming majority in Iraq and this majority supports
a specific entity and we know that it is impossible for all
entities to have the same popularity. The UIA is afraid that
there may be vote tampering. If vote counting is
transparent, the UIA will win more votes than in the
previous election."

[1C. "Nobody Can Laugh at the Iraqi People Anymore"](#)
(Az-Zaman, independent, published a front-page unattributed
editorial about the success of the Iraqi elections. In part,
the editorial reads)

"The success of the elections shows that the Iraqi people
have deep roots in civilization and history. Perhaps after
the election the Iraqi people will be able to end terrorism.

The Iraqi people practice democracy by expressing their opinions or through peaceful demonstrations. We recently saw demonstrations in the city of Kut against the government's decision to raise fuel prices. It seems that Iraqi politicians are benefiting at the expense of the hungry, deprived and wounded. However, the elections have proven that the Iraqi people will say to their politicians, 'beware of stealing the votes of the people because it's the people, not politicians who are owners of the real power.' Thus, those who seek legitimacy must satisfy the people's will."

D. "Democracy. Yes, But It's Terrible"

(Democratic Al-Wifaq, independent, weekly, anti-coalition, published this front-page editorial by Editor-in-Chief Salah Omer Al-Ali about the Iraqi elections under U.S. occupation. In part, the writer comments)

"Regardless of any negative viewpoints or irregularities that might have occurred during the parliamentary elections, these elections will determine the future of Iraq for the coming four years. This period began with a forged constitution and in any case, most political forces that participated in the elections were supported by the occupation. In brief, the political choices in Iraq have changed but the main content and goal remains unchanged. There is no independence, sovereignty, or stability under occupation. The Iraqi national resistance will not stop fighting and join the political game of the occupation. The United States is depending upon the post election period because it wants to reduce pressures on American forces through obtaining legitimacy from an elected Iraqi parliament and government."

E. "Fraud and the Democracy of the Elections"

(As-Siyada, affiliated with Iraqi Republican Assembly led by Sa'ad Assem Al-Janabi published a second-page editorial about the parliamentary elections and vote rigging. The editorial remarks in part)

"The honeymoon period of the election has ended and we find ourselves observing and worrying that this democratic practice will be violated. Unfortunately, people did not vote freely and instead chose specific electoral lists because of threats and intimidation. In fact, we must put an end to attempts to rig the real Iraqi willpower. We must put an end to those who claim to speak on behalf of Iraqis while in fact they are trading them. In this way, Iraq will be able to live in peace and prosperity."

F. "Reminder"

(As-Sabah - Iraqi Media Network, government financed, pro-coalition, published this front-page editorial by Editor-in-Chief Muhammad Abdul Jabbar on the necessity to form the next Council of Representatives as soon as possible. In part the editorial reads)

"The parliamentary elections were a tremendous success. However, we must remind ourselves of the mistakes of the former election that was held on the 30th of January with results announced a long period afterward. Moreover, the National Assembly held its first session two months after the election. In any case, the incoming Council of Representatives has four years [in office] and this figure may hint at laziness and numerous members being absent from attending sessions. The next Council of Representatives will have huge responsibilities. For this reason, it must be convened quickly and it must also move rapidly. This council must enforce laws promptly so that we will not repeat the former mistakes and waste time."

G. "Do Not Spoil Our Happiness"

(Ad-Dustoor, independent, published a front-page editorial by Editor-in-Chief Bassim Al-Sheikh about the elections and recent exchange of accusations among political parties about electoral fraud. The editorial reads in part)

"The Iraqi election on December 15 has been very successful. However, we have noticed that the big electoral lists have exchanged accusations about electoral fraud and the lack of transparency. This will spoil our joy from the election. We do not want to say that the election was entirely fair and that there were no violations or vote rigging. But, if we compare this election with other elections throughout the world, we will see that our election was more developed and honest than any other election in the world. It seems that some of the political entities did not gain what they had expected in terms of seats. But, we hope that these parties will not push to ruin the political success that was achieved thus far. We call on all political groups to let us enjoy this happiness without any problems."

KHALILZAD